DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 093 262 IR 000 707

AUTHOR Casey, Genavieve M.; Darling, Richard L.
TITLE Alternate Futures for the Public Library. Intellectual Freedom and the Librarian.
INSTITUTION Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. School of Library Sciences.
PUB DATE 74
NOTE 24p.; The Fifth Annual Alumnus-in-Residence Program

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Censorship; Cultural Centers; Educational Programs; *Futures (of Society); Information Services; *Librarians; *Library Services; Speeches
IDENTIFIERS *Intellectual Freedom; Library Bill of Rights

ABSTRACT

In the first of two speeches presented here, Genevieve M. Casey examines alternate futures for the public library, on the assumption that, if it is to remain viable, the public library must move forward in not one, but several directions, or futures. Of the many possibilities, Ms. Casey selects four already-functioning concepts as the most clearly indicated: the public library as a nontraditional agency of education; as a multifaceted information and referral center; as a rehabilitation center for the shutin and institutionalized--all helpless people in our society; and as a community cultural center. In the second speech, Richard L. Darling emphasizes the librarian's important role in the guardianship of intellectual freedom. A brief overview of censorship attempts shows that suppression of a given work may be demanded for political or social motives, as well as for sexual content. Darling then outlines the growing militancy of librarians on this issue, dating from the American Library Association's 1939 statement of Libraries' Bill of Rights. Although library organizations are making a strong defense of intellectual freedom, Darling concludes that the real responsibility still rests with the individual librarian. (SL)

ED 093262

The Fifth Annual Alumnae-in-Residence Program
School of Library Science
The University of Michigan

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ALTERNATE FUTURES FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Genevieve M. Casey

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND THE LIBRARIAN

Richard L. Darling

LR 000 787

Fifth Annual Alumnus-in-Residence Program

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Introduction

Each spring The University of Michigan's library science students and faculty welcome back to the Ann Arbor campus as Alumni-in-Residence one or more of the school's graduates. This annual program, sponsored by the Library Science Alumni Society, enables young people who are about to join the library profession to become acquainted personally with library leaders whose roots go back to The University of Michigan and to learn first hand what these distinguished alumni consider to be the current trends and issues in librarianship. During the two days set aside for this activity, ample opportunity is provided for informal discussions as well as planned lectures.

In 1973 two well-known library educators were chosen, Genevieve M. Casey and Richard L. Darling. The convocation address given by Professor Casey, "Alternate Futures for the Public Library," and the banquet address given by Dean Darling, "Intellectual Freedom and the Librarian," are presented for general distribution to Michigan alumni and friends.

Genevieve Casey, professor of Library Science at Wayne State University since 1967, did her undergraduate work at the College of St. Catherine with a major in library science. She completed her A.M.L.S. degree at The University of Michigan in 1956. From 1962 until 1967 she was head of the State Library of Michigan, which under her able administration entered on a period of record growth and expanding influence. Professor Casey had earlier held a number of administrative positions in the Detroit Public Library, including that of chief of the Extension Service. Her numerous publications, her frequent consultative services to libraries, her leadership role in association work at both the national and the state level, her excellence as a teacher, and the esteem with which she is held among her colleagues are but a few of the attributes that make Professor Casey so highly deserving of the Distinguished Alumnus Award presented to her by the school during the 1973 Alumnus-in-Residence program.

Richard L. Darling, dean of the School of Library Service, Columbia University, completed his undergraduate work at the University of Montana where he also earned the M.A. degree in English. Subsequently, he took two degrees at The University of Michigan, the A.M.L.S. in 1950 and the Ph.D. in 1960. Prior to accepting the deanship at Columbia in 1970, Dr. Darling had established an enviable reputation as an authority in the

school library field. He began his library career as head of the University of Michigan High School library in 1951. This was followed by an assistant professorship of library science at Montana State University and the post of elementary library coordinator of the Livonia, Michigan, Public Schools. From 1962 to 1964 he served as school library specialist in the U.S. Office of Education. He then joined the Montgomery County, Maryland, public schools system where he advanced to the directorship of the Department of Educational Media and Technology in 1965. Our school's Distinguished Alumnus Award was presented to Dean Darling not only in recognition of his many contributions to the school library media field and his highly successful directorship of one of the nation's most distinguished library schools, but also for his indefatigable efforts through state and national library associations in defense of intellectual freedom.

Russell E. Bidlack
Dean
School of Library Science

Contents

Alternate Futures of the Public Library 3
Genevieve M. Casey

Intellectual Freedom and the Librarian 11
Richard L. Darling

Genevieve M. Casey

Alternate Futures for the Public Library

Genevieve M. Casey

I would like to reflect with you today about some possible alternate futures for the public library. I approach the subject with two or three assumptions in which I hope you will join me. First, could we assume, for the moment at least, that there is a future for the public library? As one reads library literature, it becomes evident that this position is not universally held. Many public libraries are in serious trouble today. The grave fiscal problems of public libraries may reflect not only an economic crisis in American society, but also some real doubts on the part of appropriating bodies and the people who elect them about whether we really need public libraries. Most of you in Michigan are aware, for example, of the problems encountered by the Grosse Pointe, Michigan, Public Library a few months ago when all of the staff were put on termination notice with the understanding that the school district could no longer afford to support the public library. The Grosse Pointe story, as you know, had a happy ending, with a successful millage vote for the library; but all such stories of real fiscal problems occurring all over the country do not have such happy endings.

Even more fundamental than the fiscal problems of large core-city public libraries is the fact that we have been unable to realize our persistant dream of serving the total community, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, black, yellow, red and white, young and old. Almost thirty years ago, Dr. Robert Leigh, in his *Public Library Inquiry*, documented for us that the public library does not serve the whole community, even though we'd like it to; that in fact the public library serves a rather narrow, very clearly defined segment of somewhere between ten and twenty-five percent of the population. Public library users then and now are fairly—but not extremely—well educated and economically stable, not very rich or very poor, and are middle class and white. In a more recent study which Allie Beth Martin did for the Public Library Association, the same group emerged as the traditional public library users. As everyone knows, white, middle class, fairly well educated, fairly affluent people have moved, and continue to move, to the suburbs leaving the great American city libraries with a seriously eroded public. The public library indeed has serious problems of identity and survival. Nevertheless, I would like to invite you to join me, for the moment at least, in an act of faith that an agency with a

mission to make the human record effectively available to everyone, whether or not he is affiliated in any way with any formal education or any profession, indeed is a necessary agency and indeed has a future.

The second assumption which I think we can make reasonably is that the public library in the future will not be the same as it is today. Every institution and agency in our society is undergoing massive change and it would be foolish to expect the library to be exempt. I think we must realize, however, that not every institution, as indeed not every individual, lives in the same century. I have a charming brother-in-law, for example, who lives quite successfully in the thirteenth century. Too many public libraries are living, or attempting to live, in the nineteenth century, and many more public libraries are in the early twentieth century. Too few public libraries are really geared psychologically for the twenty-first century which is only twenty-seven years away. So let us assume that whatever the future of the public library in the twenty-first century, it will not be the same institution as it is today. The other word that I would call your attention to is the word "alternate." If the public library is indeed to survive and to realize our dream of serving its *total* community, then the future we face is not a future, but "alternate futures," because potentially, at least, we serve not a public, but a whole variety of publics. In summary, within these three assumptions, which you may or may not accept—(1) that the public library has a future, (2) that the future will be different from what it is now, and (3) that we have not one but many futures—let us reflect upon some of the directions in which the library may be going. I would like us to explore, among the dozens or hundreds of possible futures for the library, four, which it seems to me are most clearly indicated. None of these futures is totally new. All have some roots in the past and some indication in the present.

First, I would like to suggest to you that the public library has indeed a very bright future as a *non-traditional agency of education*. The traditional educational agency, of course, is the school, college, and university. For a significant number of people in our world today, however, education as it is presented by the schools simply doesn't "take," and this is true at every level from kindergarten to graduate school. For most of us in this room, education, or schooling as we have known it, has been reasonably successful. I didn't feel oppressed or depressed by formal education, at least not most of the time. I found it a lovely opportunity to learn, and I thought so all the way from the time I entered first grade until I was at the University of Michigan library school. We have to face the fact, however, that our own experiences are not universally valid, and that society needs some alternatives to formal education as it is presently practiced.

Recently I have been associated with a very interesting project in Appalachia concerned with teaching functionally illiterate adults to read. The project is attempting to bring public libraries in four Appalachian

communities into a very close liaison with adult basic education people in an attempt to provide a higher level of education and opportunity for adult illiterates. The adult basic education people have taught me a great deal. At one of the advisory committee meetings recently, one of them who had been working for a long time in the field said: "I came to my present position through the schools—I used to teach in elementary schools in Kentucky. When I started to teach school, and for many years thereafter, I assumed that learning was a group affair." And isn't that what we all assume at almost any level of education? The teacher attempts to reach a common denominator in the group and the group attempts to participate in the learning; it's a group affair.

"Well," this man continued, "one day it suddenly dawned on me that there were better ways to facilitate learning, and I decided that learning was a private, individual affair. So, I did all sorts of things within my classroom to facilitate individual learning." Sometimes I smile at how educators go about achieving individualized instruction. At one community college I have visited they have recorded all of the professors' lectures on tape and presented all the students with packaged programs. Somehow this to me does not quite come out as individualized instruction, even though the attempt is noble. But, for better or worse, we continue to try for individualized rather than group instruction. "But," my friend in Kentucky said, "I now have a new idea. After working for several years with adults who are learning I have come to the conviction that learning is a *family* affair." The evidence which led him to this conviction was that when a mother or a father or both who were illiterate became involved in adult basic education suddenly many good things happened in the family; the children began to do better in school, and families, which were suffering all sorts of social and personal problems, began to stabilize. Learning, he decided, is not a group affair, it is more an individual affair, but primarily and ideally, learning is a family affair. If that man is right, and if Ivan Illich is right when he claims that education should be deschooled, if all of our observations are correct that for too many people schooling does not "take" as it presently is presented in traditional agencies, then it seems to me the public library has a beautiful opportunity to offer an alternative.

The traditional approach of the public library is an individual approach. We take people where they are, people come to the public library because they wish to, and they come as individuals or as family groups. It seems to me we have a marvelous opportunity to exploit this distinctive quality. There are some straws in the wind as I'm sure you know. As near as St. Clair Shores, Michigan, and as far away as Dallas and in many places in between, public libraries are doing some very interesting things with the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), in which adults are able to come to the public library, and working with the librarians and with the materials that are there, prepare themselves for college examinations for which they then get credit. It seems to me, that if the public library wishes

to go more deeply into this area, to exploit to a greater degree its opportunity to be indeed the people's university (an old idea), it would be wise for us to start with adults—maybe even with older adults. I think it would be wise if we started outside the area of credentials, and did not complicate our experiments in non-traditional education by worrying about credentialing. I think, however, there is a real possibility that we could learn some things and develop some programs that would take us down even to the level of children who do not learn to read in the traditional educational agency and eventually drop out. Society needs some alternatives to the present traditional agencies, not to put the schools out of business but to offer something different so students have a choice. The future of the public library as one of these alternative agencies is there for us to shape.

The second area about which I would like to reflect is the public library as an *information center*. Again, we've been in the information business forever, and commonly we have followed a rather traditional way to present this information. We have thought that we must provide materials on all levels and all sides of a question, haven't we? We have truly thought that we ought not to editorialize about the information that we present. The way we commonly present information in a public library when someone asks us a question is to give him or her a pile of books with places marked in them. I think we shall have to rethink how we package and present information if we are going to realize our potential as an information center. We must recognize that information has so proliferated that the problem is not a paucity but a glut. We must recognize that our public needs an agency to organize, evaluate, and digest information in terms of each individual's need. To attempt to offer each person *all* information on *all* aspects of a question may be neither possible nor desired. I do not overlook here the whole question of intellectual freedom and of our need to protect the right of the public to know every side, nor do I minimize the practical and ethical problems.

Information can be conceived on several levels. One easy area to think about, if not to produce, is information about community resources. The need for the public library to focus its professional skills in the gathering, organizing, and disseminating of information is evident if you look at any community and look at the number of agencies which, in a more or less amateurish way, are attempting to provide information. The information being given people is frequently grossly inadequate, even false, because the agencies presenting it lack specific library skills in acquisition and organization. There are, however, some new techniques we need to graft onto our traditional library skills if we are to enter a future as information centers. To begin with, we must build feedback into our delivery system. We must know whether the information we are offering is good, accurate, relevant information. In Lowell Martin's study of the Chicago Public Library, he documented that about fifty per cent of the information

handed out across the desk of the Chicago Public Library was inaccurate. How sure are any of us that if a similar study were being made of other public libraries, the percentages would prove much better? How do we know whether the information we are handing out is right or not if we don't build in feedback? And when we start building in feedback, we may find that in about one-third of the referrals we make, our patron doesn't get what he wants. If, for example, a ninety-year-old man comes into your library information center and needs to have glasses, and your perfectly accurate and up-to-date file tells you exactly what agency to refer him to, and if you discover through your feedback mechanism that when he went to this agency they told him they were sorry but they had a long waiting list and perhaps in two years they would get to his name—if you have proper feedback and get this kind of message from your old man, which you will in about one-third of the instances, according to the people who do this, then you are going to find yourself, if you are going to be worth your salt, in a position of being advocate for that old man. This is an area that the public library up to now has not been prepared to face at all.

Another area that it seems to me this information center business implies is that we are going to have to stretch our minds about differentiated staffing. It may well be that we not only need to have on our public library staffs librarians, and associates, and technicians, and clerks, and janitors, and something else called para-professionals, we may indeed have to have people with other professional skills on our staff. Perhaps we need social work skills; perhaps we need many other different kinds of skills. This is implied, I think, in thinking about the library's future as a community information referral center.

We have been discussing, up to now, the library as a center for information equated only with facts. The library profession in general, I feel, has faced insufficiently the real problem—the problem of organizing the human record so that we can retrieve from it not so much facts (although we don't do that any too well), but *wisdom* or *ideas*. If you take the view that librarianship essentially is that profession which gathers, selects, and organizes the human record so that it can be retrieved in terms of individual or group need, then the world has a right to expect this service of us, and, truly, we cannot deliver. Let me illustrate with a little true story:

> A newly elected governor, on the first Wednesday of November, telephoned his state library and said, candidly: "You know I've never been Governor before; in fact, I really don't know very much about politics. Now I don't have much time, but I really want to be a good governor, and you must have some books among the one million volumes in the State Library that would give me some clues about how to be a good governor." The governor concluded by saying that he would send his aide to pick up the books the following afternoon. Needless to say, this sent

> my friends at the state library into pure panic. What would you do with that question? The truth is that our ways of organizing materials do not lead us to answer the governor's real and very good question.

Does Dewey with his naive view about dividing human knowledge into ten categories answer that question? Does Library of Congress classification with the equally naive notion of dividing knowledge into combinations of twenty-six letters answer that question? If my state library friends answered the governor's question at all, they didn't answer it as librarians—they simply answered it as ordinarily intelligent, well-read people, who somehow made some stab at gathering some materials out of the human record. But in terms of any scientific, professional keys to the wisdom in the human record that would help a governor of a state be a good governor, we don't have those keys. Hopefully, you students who are the librarians of the future will develop them. If we believe that providing information is the mission of the library, and if we mean by information, the whole human record, then indeed we are speaking about a function central to librarianship.

We have discussed now two possible directions for the public library, both of which have beginnings in our present concept of mission and performance—the library as a non-traditional educational agency and the library as an information center. There are two other possible futures that I would like to explore with you.

One is the future of the library as a *rehabilitation center*—the library with a mission to the institutionalized, to the delinquent, to the criminal, to the aged, to the addicted, to the shut-in, to all helpless people in our society. Even in terms of institutional self interest, it would behoove public libraries to focus more attention upon this group. As we mentioned earlier, our traditional public has been eroded by flight to the suburbs and by such other factors as the improvement of school and academic libraries and the paperback revolution. I'm sure you're all aware of the proposal in New York that would take responsibility for service to children away entirely from the public library. There is one public, however, that nobody else is in any position to serve, and that is this handicapped, institutionalized public. These commonly are not people with any affiliations with formal education. These are not people who have professional libraries at their disposal. These are people who have nothing—no access to the human record, unless we as public librarians choose to provide it for them. Again, this is not a new idea; many public libraries are offering some measure of service to one or another of these groups. It is my impression, however, that we are going to have to do a great deal of rethinking and restructuring of our library services if we are going to provide a truly meaningful service, or any service for that matter,

to these people who are really locked away in a variety of ways from using our agencies as they presently are.

An encounter I experienced recently will illustrate my point. One evening at rush hour, on a very busy street, I stopped my car to mail a letter. An old woman, across the street, gestured wildly to me to wait. Eventually, she managed to cross the river of traffic. She wanted my help because she was lost and frightened. She had been out to a suburban shopping center and had taken the wrong bus, or gotten off at the wrong corner. She had, she told me, already been mugged and robbed on the street, several times. It was growing dusk and she was frightened. I found out where she lived, and indeed she was lost, several miles from her home. As I drove her home, I asked her whether she used the public library which I recalled was close to her address. "I used to," she said, "but I don't go over there much any more. In fact," she said, "I don't think I'm ever going out again anymore, it's just too hard." Well she isn't, and she shouldn't. Although this woman was not physically ill (she had the energy to have acquired several enormous packages in the shopping center), she was increasingly immobile. The public library was not structured to that woman's needs, and if the public library wishes really to serve that woman, and many others like her, we are going to have to find ways to go out.

I'm sure you're aware that in Illinois the State Library is contracting now with public library systems for service to staff and inmates of institutions within the service area of the system. This may mean a whole new development all across the country if it works well. I'm sure you're also aware that there is a policy in Michigan, and indeed in most states, to empty out the large institutions which are regarded as a dehumanizing environment and to send patients back into the community to live in small foster-homes. People who have lived in the controlled atmosphere of an institution for as long as twenty years are now expected to cope with life in the world; thus far the results have been questionable. If it was hard to supervise what went on in a large institution, it is impossible to supervise what goes on in hundreds of small foster homes. Some patients indeed are welcomed into a warm and decent family atmosphere; others have a place to sleep, and more or less enough to eat, but are utterly neglected. Many are in their forties, the new aged who will never really find a place in the world. In every city, in addition to the refugees from the mental health institutions, halfway houses for alcoholics and narcotic addicts have sprung up. All these people, handicapped either physically or psychologically or both, are a group the public library should consider. Nobody, but nobody, is going to offer them any kind of intellectual stimulation, any kind of access to the record, unless the public library choses to do so. There's a great deal of evidence that library services can improve the quality of life for many handicapped in a variety of ways. We in the public library

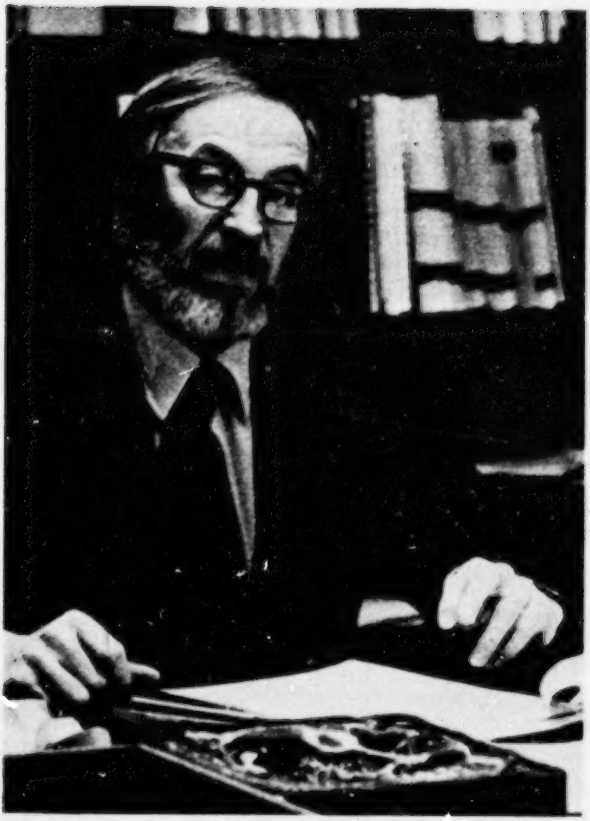
haven't really exploited bibliotherapy and I would propose that another important future for the public library is as a rehabilitation center.

The final thought that I would like to propose to you is that the public library might extend its activities as a *cultural center* in this pluralistic world in which we live. There was a time, you know, when the public library as an agency of acculturization for the immigrants who were coming in great numbers to our shores was very successful. The immigrants, who came largely from Europe in those days, very much wished to be acculturized—Americanized. In those days we all believed in the melting pot, and they found the public pot, and they found the public library a highly useful agency. Today, the new immigrants to the cities are a very different breed. We, and they, know very well that the pot doesn't melt, and we don't even want it to melt any more. We are coming to the conviction that the strength of this country is in a kind of accentuation of a variety of cultural traditions. The public library again, it seems to me, has a magnificent opportunity, and a magnificent structure almost as it is to give people a sense of their cultural identity—a sense of pride in that identity, whatever its ethnic or cultural background. The public library is admirably suited to give people an opportunity to appreciate each other's cultural heritage. This isn't a brand new idea, and many public libraries have been doing it for many, many years. I suppose the Cleveland Public Library is an outstanding example of a library that has attempted to preserve and accentuate cultural traditions in that city over many years, but we could do a great deal more.

Our communities need cultural centers, not only to give people a place to find their own identity and to learn appreciation for other cultural traditions, but also to find an outlet for individual creativity. We have become, unfortunately, a nation of spectators. We sit in front of that television and we look; we go to ball games and we look; some of us go to museums and we look; we go to concerts and we hear. But there is not much encouragement for us to create, to express ourselves. To express yourself is to communicate with somebody else—this is of the nature of the creative act. Certainly, in these very complicated, depersonalized, urban situations, we all need opportunities to communicate. We need someone to write for, someone to paint for, someone to compose for, someone to play for—and the public library has a marvelous opportunity to be a catalyst and to provide audiences for cultural expression. I don't know how many of you have looked at the notable books list this year, and how many of you have thought about the quality of the literature on that list, but I find the artistic quality of what is being written now truly appalling. Sometimes I think we're in an almost anti-intellectual, anti-artistic, alienated, depersonalized stage in history, and maybe this is because we don't have great audiences. Perhaps we're not going to have great literature unless we have great readers; perhaps we're not going to have great music unless we have great listeners; perhaps we're not going

to have great art, unless we have great appreciators. And perhaps the best way we become great appreciators, great readers, great listeners is through our own creativity. The public library could act as a very powerful cultural center in any community. We have the plant; we almost have the tradition.

I have suggested to you today four futures for the public library which could be very bright. I have suggested that the public library can make an important contribution as a non-traditional educational agency, as an information and referral center, as a rehabilitation center, and as a cultural center. I do not mean to imply that these are the only futures for the public library, but I do say that if you students who are going into the public library field have the energy, and the intelligence, and the creativity to shape this institution which is ready for the shaping into these and some other alternate futures, then indeed we need not worry about the fiscal problems of public libraries. These, I think, will take care of themselves.



Richard L. Darling

Intellectual Freedom and the Librarian

Richard L. Darling

For longer than most of us like to remember, the general public's image of the librarian has not been an exciting one. Far from seeming a romantic profession, librarianship has seemed, to many people, one of the stodgiest, perhaps even the stodgiest. All of us who are or aspire to be librarians would dispute such an uninformed evaluation, knowing as we do the vital importance of information to all human accomplishment. Yet any definition of the function of libraries we are likely to hear fails to stir the pulse.

The American Library Association's policy statement, "Library Education and Manpower," approved at the Detroit Conference in 1970, includes a reasonably complete, brief definition of library service.

> Library service as here understood is concerned with knowledge and information in their several forms—their identification, selection, acquisition, preservation, organization, communication and interpretation, and with assistance in their use.

Certainly this sounds like a socially useful pursuit, but not one likely to arouse either controversy or opposition. Who would object to the librarian collecting and preserving information and ideas and making them available to the general public?

The answer is, of course, that a great many people object. Perhaps no one would if we only acquired, preserved, and organized "knowledge and information in their several forms," but when we go on with communication and interpretation of the media of knowledge and information, we become controversial indeed—even dangerous if strong minded individuals or militant groups are opposed to the ideas contained in the media we disseminate. When these individuals and groups feel so strongly opposed to ideas contrary to their own that they are moved to action, librarians discover that they have chosen a profession that is exciting, even hazardous, and that they may be called upon for courageous action, perhaps for heroic action.

In such a situation librarians need to be more than the preserver and disseminator of information. They need also to be the guardian of the right of all library patrons, or potential patrons, to have access to information. This role for librarians is particularly important in a society striving to achieve democracy, as is our own society. The creation of an open and

democratic society is only possible when citizens have access to all possible alternative ideas in order to evaluate and choose among them. American librarians have made freedom of access to information—the doctrine of intellectual freedom and opposition to censorship—a vital element in their professional creed.

The concept of intellectual freedom is a complex and highly abstract one, and I might add, one to which American librarians have not always subscribed. By intellectual freedom we mean that it "is the right of every person to believe what he wants on any subject, and to express his beliefs orally or graphically, publicly or privately." Such a definition implies that with the right to express opinions goes the right of others to hear you speak, to read your writing, or to view your graphic productions; in other words, a right to access to all ideas and information. Intellectual freedom is impaired if ideas cannot be expressed or if access to them is denied.

Attempts to suppress ideas and information must be as old as human society. Governments have always considered ideas opposed to the status quo to be subversive, and religions have hated and sought to root out real or imagined heresy. Both have tried to suppress opposition by denying the right to publish, or by forbidding the distribution of what is already published.

There is also an old tradition, at least in England and the United States, of resistance to censorship. Milton, Locke, and Mill, in England, and Thomas Jefferson in the U.S. have contributed arguments against censorship which have become part of our consciousness, even if we have never read their writings. John Milton, in his pamphlet *Aereopagitica*, argued for the social utility of liberty. Admittedly, he had a vested interest in freedom of the press since his pamphlet in favor of divorce had been suppressed, but his argument was no less forceful because he wished to get rid of his wife.

John Locke, in his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, argued that the state had the right only to concern itself with secular affairs, but not with the citizens' beliefs. In the nineteenth century, the utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill would argue, as did Milton, from a very practical point of view that suppression of opinion may only serve to blot out truth. Even though an opinion might be false, he argued, the cause of truth is better served by refuting error in public than by hiding it from the public eye. We lack faith in our ideas if we are unwilling to have them challenged by opposing ones.

Thomas Jefferson, holding similar beliefs to Locke and Milton, raised another important point concerning censorship when he said, "are we to have a censor whose imprimatur shall say what books may be sold, and what we may buy? . . . shall a layman, simple as ourselves, set up his reason as the rule for what we ought to read . . .? It is an insult to our citizens to question whether they are rational beings or not." Jefferson's words may not have deflected the desire of some among us to set up their

reason as the rule, but his ideas on censorship had a unique influence on our laws, since the first amendment to our Constitution is the strongest proscription against censorship that can be found. It says, as you will recall,

> Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

This constitutes the only absolute prohibition forbidding Congress to enact laws. It seems obvious that the constitutional intent was to prevent the government from enacting legislation limiting freedom of speech and of the press. Yet, citizens have had to battle, continuously, to prevent the government and other citizens from imposing censorship. If anything, we are forced today to defend intellectual freedom more than ever before.

It may be worthwhile, for a few moments, to look at censorship, its nature, and its favorite targets. Basically there are two kinds of attempted censorship, official and vigilante, and they are equally dangerous. Official censorship is that which is mandated by law at any level of government. Vigilante censorship attempts are those of self appointed arbiters of public morality, religion, politics, and social attitudes. With both kinds, either overtly or covertly, its proponents are attempting to impose through public action what is essentially private—a set of beliefs and attitudes.

The First Amendment to the Constitution notwithstanding, federal, state, and local governments have imposed censorship. The national government has notoriously misused the postal laws and the right to classify information to deny access by citizens to information. More subtly, it has imperiled the integrity of legislative, judicial, and administrative procedures, originally created as important public safeguards, to impose conformity with current policies by intimidating its opposition. In recent years we have seen the federal government misuse laws, the grand jury, and its right to license the broadcast media in attempts to silence its critics.

State and local governments have been no more diligent than the federal one in protecting intellectual freedom. Well over half the states have obscenity laws, many of them exceedingly repressive. Local governments have similar laws, frequently with even fewer safeguards for the public.

Vigilante censorship, on the other hand, does not have the facade of law behind it, though pressure groups opposing ideas different from their own often try to persuade the lawmakers to enact laws to suppress the ideas of those with whom they disagree. Vigilante groups use propaganda, boycotts, and pressure on libraries, booksellers, publishers, and broadcasters to intimidate them so that they will cease distributing or producing works the vigilantes find offensive.

The traditional subjects the censors have concerned themselves with have been sex, politics, and religion. Religion, historically the most frequent excuse for censorship, is today, less often a target. A recent case, in the Rochester, Michigan, public schools, had a new twist. A local judge ordered Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* removed from the high school library because, he declared, it violated the Supreme Court's decision on prayer in the schools. In his written opinion, he said that the book taught anti-religion, which he equated with teaching religion. Since anti-religion was just another form of religion, the school violated the Constitution by having the book. Competent lawyers reported this decision to be the worst and most illogical one they had ever read. Fortunately the higher court agreed and reversed the lower court when the Rochester Board of Education appealed.

Far more works are attacked on the basis of alleged sexuality or obscenity. Probably *Catcher in the Rye*, now more than twenty years old, is the most censored book in the schools of the country. Every year it is attacked somewhere, and at times successfully. Other books frequently attacked on grounds that they contain objectionable sexual matters are *Down These Mean Streets*, *Manchild in the Promised Land*, *Black Voice*, and *Black Like Me*. Often the attack on alleged sexuality in a work, however, is a thinly disguised cover for objection to its attitude on social concerns.

Most attacks based on the political content of books are aimed at labelling them subversive, communistic, or communist inspired. The Baltimore city comptroller charged that *The Inner City Mother Goose* was "part of a nationwide plot to just cause this country to disintegrate." In Richfield, Connecticut, the school board banned Mike Royko's *Boss*, objecting to its unfriendly portrayal of Chicago's Mayor Daley. Every issue of the *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* reports new cases of attempts to censor works because of their politics.

Perhaps the most disturbing trend in attempted censorship relates to attacks on works because they do not conform to current social attitudes. While attacks on books on religious, political, and sexual grounds have traditionally stemmed from extreme right-wing political and religious groups, these new attempts to censor on social issues as often as not stem from erstwhile liberal and progressive groups representing minorities, both religious and racial, and the women's movement. These groups are demanding that libraries ban works which they say present them in an unfavorable light. Most frequently, their ire has been directed toward children's books so that we are witnessing a mushrooming demand for the banning of *Little Black Sambo*, *Doctor Doolittle*, and even of *Mother Goose*. Often all of us are sympathetic with the causes of the groups objecting to these books, and understanding of their specific complaints, but by yielding to their pressures we violate the principles we must hold fast to if we are to protect the works they find sympathetic.

Libraries in the United States have become important defenders of in-

tellectual freedom in their struggle to oppose would-be censors of libraries. Increasingly they have become the one possible source for information giving all points of view concerning any issue. The censors on the right usually have wealth behind them as they seek to suppress ideas they don't like. The press and the mass media, by and large, are controlled by large business and financial interests and tend to foster particular points of view.

The government, itself, has taken the forefront in suppression of information. Many citizens have worried about the government's power to classify information and withhold it from the public. Fear that this legitimate power might be misused became certainty that it was misused when the *Pentagon Papers* were released by Daniel Ellsberg in 1971. Threats of high government officials directed at the news and broadcast media have increased our conviction that the citizen seeking the best possible information cannot depend on the mass media nor on the protection of governments seeking to promote their own policies. The library remains as the one institution that belongs to no party, has espoused no religion, defends the narrow moral code of no particular sect, and can gain nothing by denying citizens access to all information. The "professional librarian's first commitment must be to preserve intellectual freedom for everyone" by providing access to all information.

American librarians have not always been as militant in defense of intellectual freedom as they are today. In his 1908 inaugural address, ALA President Arthur Bostwick urged the suppression of what he called immoral books, and, during World War I, ALA cooperated with the government in suppressing pacifist literature.

By 1939, however, with approval of its "Libraries' Bill of Rights," forerunner of today's "Library Bill of Rights," ALA had made defense of intellectual freedom one of its basic policies. Since that time it has extended and strengthened its position.

In 1940, the ALA council approved the establishment of its Intellectual Freedom Committee to act as a watchdog for the "Library Bill of Rights" and to alert the Association to possible infringements on the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This committee was instrumental in amending the "Library Bill of Rights" to include a statement supporting the access of all individuals to libraries without regard to their race, religion, national origins, or social or political views; age was later added to the list. It has prepared important intellectual freedom documents, which ALA has adopted, some establishing the Association's position on such problems as labelling library materials, and loyalty oaths, and others providing interpretation of the "Library Bill of Rights" on such topics as access to libraries for minors.

ALA has created additional arms for its intellectual freedom program. It established the Office for Intellectual Freedom as an agency for educational freedom. The OIF publishes the *Newsletter on Intellectual*

Freedom which reports bi-monthly on censorship attempts around the country. It also coordinates the work of the intellectual freedom committees of the state library associations. It received the 1972 ALA Morris Jones Award to conduct a national prototype workshop on intellectual freedom to be held April 16 and 17 for two representatives of each of the state library associations. In turn, the state representatives will be expected to conduct similar workshops in each state.

ALA also created the semi-independent Freedom To Read Foundation as its legal arm. Its function is to establish the principles of the "Library Bill of Rights" in law by acting in the courts to defend individuals and groups in intellectual freedom cases. The foundation's most massive effort to date is its action in consort with six California librarians and the California Library Association to have the California Harmful Matters statute declared unconstitutional in federal court. If successful through the various levels of appeal, this would have the effect of outlawing all the state obscenity laws. The Freedom To Read Foundation administers the LeRoy C. Merritt Fund which gives direct financial aid to persons under attack in cases which may involve intellectual freedom.

In 1971 ALA adopted its Action Program for Mediation, Arbitration, and Inquiry to provide an investigative mechanism to determine the facts in cases involving allegations relating to intellectual freedom, academic freedom and tenure, and due process. This program strengthens ALA's ability to protect librarians who suffer for upholding professional principles, including those of intellectual freedom.

Through the last thirty-five or forty years, ALA has moved into a stronger and stronger position supporting freedom of access to information. It will undoubtedly continue to do more. In the final analysis, however, freedom of access to information depends not on the Association but on the commitment of individual librarians to the principles of intellectual freedom, on their acceptance of those principles as the basis for a code of ethical conduct for librarians. Many librarians do. A recent survey of attitudes of library administrators reported in the *Wilson Library Bulletin*, however, indicates that there is by no means unanimous support. Some librarians even see their role as censors of ideas with which they disagree, but I believe that a majority would uphold intellectual freedom.

Libraries can help disarm the censors through following intelligent professional practices. They should, and many do, adopt written statements outlining their materials selection and acquisition policies, and procedures for handling complaints. They should inform their public of the nature and purpose of their selection policy, and, to the extent possible, avoid those problems that come from lack of understanding.

But whatever precautions you have taken, the odds are that at some time in your career, you must face the censors. Some will be sincere but misguided individuals; others will be sinister in their beliefs and unscrupulous in their methods. If you are lucky, you will win—perhaps

without a real struggle. But you may not be so fortunate. You may be called upon to fight hard for your principles, and you may lose. Librarians who have stood firm in defense of intellectual freedom have been vilified, persecuted, and discharged from their positions for defending the right of all the library's patrons to have free and open access to information and ideas. I hope none of you here tonight will find yourself in such a difficult situation. But if you do, I hope you will remember that as a member of a profession dedicated to meeting the information needs of society, your function is diminished when you become the instrument, willing or not, that limits the free flow of information. By supporting the principles of intellectual freedom, by assuring all citizens that in the nation's libraries they can find all information, you uphold the most basic principle of librarianship as we know it, and prove that the general image of the librarian is ill-founded indeed.